

# Grandpa's Tears

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My Grandpa was born an Indian

I remember my Grandpa, Sunday Nights

Mutual of Omaha, Wild Kingdom.

Misty eyes, anger, a grown man reduced to tears

As he witnesses his people, his culture, being reduced to a corporate logo.

Born an Indian, died a "white" man.

Manifest destiny written in blood, sweat, tears and pain.

What's your roll number, little Indian?

Better to get work, be a good Indian, don't complain.

While your world changes in front of your very eyes, one moment a proud and sweet child of the Plains, a Shawnee kid, grows up and is declared "white" just to get by.

Leva was his name, but to everyone he was Lee.

I love him, and miss him more than anyone could possibly imagine.

But my Grandpa was born an Indian, no piece of paper, no government writ, no blood quantum, roll number, or parcelized, sanitized, fictional "good old days" can change this, or change me.

I am here, now, and I remain.

The grandchild of Leva Gamble, Shawnee man.